

- whom. *The Independent*, 30 August. Also published in R.D. Laing memorial issue *Asylum Magazine*, Vol 4, No 2, February 1990 and Mullan, B (ed) R D Laing: Creative Destroyer. London: Cassell.
- Sigal, C. (1996). Working with Laing. *The New York Review of Books*, 14 November. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1320>
- Thompson, M.G. (2006). A road less travelled: The hidden sources of R.D. Laing's enigmatic relationship with authenticity. *Existential Analysis*, 17.1.
- Wallis, J. (1993). *Mother of World Peace: The Life of Muriel Lester*. Middlesex: Hisarlik Press.

Websites:

- Philadelphia Association - <http://www.philadelphia-association.co.uk/>
- Kingsley Hall - <http://www.kingsleyhall.co.uk/>
- Society of Laingian Studies - <http://www.laingsociety.org/index.htm>
- Asylum Magazine - <http://www.asylumonline.net/>
- Mental Health Providers Forum - <http://www.mhpf.org.uk/>

Rosemary Moore

Zone of the Interior

Clancy Sigal. (2005). Pomona. 404 pp. £9.99.

Zone of the Interior is a very funny, outrageous, biting, venomous and painful satire of the accomplishments and pretensions of 'anti-psychiatry' and 'anti-psychiatrists.' These include R. D. Laing (roughly denoted as Dr Willie Last), Aaron Esterson (Boris Petkin), David Cooper (Dick Drummond), Mary Barnes (Anna Shepherd), myself (Marvin Munshin), and others, as well as Shenley Hospital's Villa 21 (Con House) and Kingsley Hall (Meditation Manor). With an acute ear, keen eyes and sensitive nose, Clancy Segal interweaves fact and phantasy, as he tells the story of his attempts to seduce and be seduced by drugs and madness and revolution during the 'swinging 60's.'

One might say that this novel is a shriek, the fictional counterpart of Allen Ginsberg's poem, *Howl*. Both aim to depict reality, both from the micro reaches of the soul to the macro dimensions of medical and political processes. In doing so Segal deploys accurate depictions of Laing's ideas with fanciful accounts of their relationships. Often I wished he had simply have written a detailed chronicle of events. At other times I enjoyed his fictionalized accounts of LSD sessions and revolutionary intrigues. And I loved his dialogues with 'Dr Last,' while utilizing a barely readable Scottish brogue. The real Ronnie did have a marked Scottish accent, but rarely talked 'Scottish.'

Segal demonstrates the painful scars of many very talented people who tried to get close, and stay close to Laing, only to be rebuffed by Ronnie's fears of suffocation. I don't know of anyone who was not eventually rejected, although a few colleagues stayed attached for long periods of time. by anticipating Laing's needs and desires and twisting and turning with him. Thus, when he was into revolution, you talked left politics (easy for Segal) when he was into acid, you were into acid (also easy), when he was into Eastern mysticism, you chanted OHMMM (much harder). Segal was clearly overwhelmed by Laing's brilliance, but may not have realized that his mentor was also a consummate '*mind fucker*' and trickster. Like the mythical character, he could heal and hurt with equal facility.

Segal did describe the way that Laing or Last, I forget who, always positioned himself with those around him so that he knew what they were thinking about each other, but that they did not know what he was thinking about them. Essentially Laing liked to remain at the centre of a wheel, with all the channels having to go through him. That way he gained great power over others. It took me a long time to figure this out, not the least because like Segal, I was dazzled by his brilliance, and my own desire to idealize him.

De-idealizations are very painful. Segal's comes at the end of the novel, when he finally achieved a state of madness. He thought Ronnie would love him. Instead Laing got frightened and convinced members of his inner circle to waylay Segal at his flat, inject him with Largactil and bring him back to Kingsley Hall '*for his own good.*' There he slept off his drugs and depression and finally escaped back into sanity. Segal's description is somewhat contrived but basically accurate. I should know, as I was co-opted for the ride. Very exciting it was too, at the time. But it did get my own doubts going. These culminated at the Dialectics of Liberation conference in July 1967 when Laing greeted one of the principle speakers, the black power leader, Stokely Carmichael, with the words, "*Ah Mr. Carmichael, that is a Scottish name, must mean that one of my ancestors owned one of your ancestors.*" I thought, "*What a shmuck!*" Maybe Segal thought the same, after what was essentially a group rape. But it did lead to a very rich novel.

Eventually I made my peace with Laing and am grateful for the experiences and erudition he shared with me. I wish he had lived long enough to visit the facility I started, The Arbours Crisis Centre. Before he died in 1989 I did send him a copy of *The Tyranny of Malice*. He replied that it was a fine title and suggested that he might like to use a similar one to be called, The Tyranny of Love. I am not sure that Clancy Segal has managed a similar mental reconciliation. The bitterness of his hurt flows through his words. But then, as Ronnie, might say, "Wha' th' fuk"

References

- Ginsburg, A. (1967). *Howl*. San Francisco, USA: City Lights.
 Berke J.H. (1998). *The Tyranny of Malice: Exploring the Dark Side of Character and Culture*. London: Simon and Schuster.

Joseph Berke

Zone of the Interior

Clancy Sigal. (2005). Pomona. 404 pp. £9.99.

I first read *Zone of the Interior* not long after its original publication in 1976 while living in London as a student at the Philadelphia Association, the therapeutic organization founded by, among others, R.D. Laing and the author of the book under review, Clancy Sigal. Like so many other Americans, I had traveled to Britain to work with the man who was considered the most charismatic and radical psychiatrist and psychoanalyst in the world, R.D. Laing. I was living in one of the post-Kingsley Hall residential houses (Portland Road) run by Laing's colleague, Hugh Crawford, and supporting my studies and living expenses by serving as the administrator and sole employee of the Philadelphia Association, the umbrella organization that had founded Kingsley Hall and the half dozen or so houses that were subsequently started after its closure in 1960. According to Sigal, no British publisher would touch the book because of its libelous content, but many copies of the American edition circulated throughout the PA and were readily available. Indeed, it was required reading for all of us who were involved with the PA and was the topic of dinner conversation for a year or more following its publication.

Now, some thirty years later, *Existential Analysis* has invited me, along with others, to read the book again and review it for this journal. This has been an interesting and emotional experience as I have not looked at the book nor discussed it with anyone in the intervening time, so I have both my initial reaction and this, more recent, reading to call upon in this review.

My initial reaction to the book was colored with near breathless excitement for, despite the author's disclaimer that "*this book is a work of imagination and all the characters purely fictional*," everyone in the P.A. knew that it was in fact a savage autobiographical account of Sigal's relationship and subsequent falling out with Laing, dating back to the mid-1960s not long after Kingsley Hall was founded, in 1965. Sigal was just as distressed at his failure to find a British publisher as Laing was with Sigal's portrayal of him in the book. It is impossible for the reader to determine what is fictional and what isn't - or at any rate, the author's heart-felt account of his side of the story. Laing wasn't especially eager to